(c) whether any authentic study has been conducted on the environmental impact of mining of beach sand minerals in the coastal area of Alappuzha; and

(d) if so, the details of the study report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Government of Kerala has submitted 3 proposals seeking clearance of the Government of India for grant of mining lease in favour of M/s. Kerala Rare Earths and Minerals Ltd., Alwaye for 20 years for a total area of 13.6500 hectares of land located in Purakkad village of Ambalapuzha Taluk and Thrikkunnapuzha village of Karthikapalli Taluk both of Alappuzha District of Kerala. The applications are presently being processed in consultation with various agencies concerned.

(c) Government of India has not conducted any environmental study in the coastal area of Alappuzha.

(d) Does not arise.

Irradiation technique for food processing

410. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether irradiation technique is useful and cheap for food processing;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to set up irradiation facilities in Southern States particularly in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The radiation processing technology for food preservation is very effective, useful and economically viable. Considering the advantages it offers, over the conventional means, say fumigation, it turns out to be a cost-effective method for processing of food

products. The irradiation technique provides the following distinct advantages:

* Extension of shelf life of food products by killing micro-organisms causing spoilage.
* Enhancement of safety by killing food borne pathogens and parasites.
* Inhibiting sprouting in tubers, bulbs and rhizomes.
* Delaying ripening of fruits.
* Destroying insect pests in stored product and fruits.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) encourages private entrepreneurs to set up such plants. MoUs have already been signed with a few companies and Farmers' Co-operative Societies for setting up of such plants. One such company, *viz.* M/s Gamma Weld Inspection Services, Hyderabad has shown interest in setting up a facility at Hyderabad for processing of food and medical products.

Waiting list of telephone connections in Karnataka

411. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of people in the waiting list for telephone connections in Karnataka as on June, 2003, district-wise; and

(b) by when these people are likely to be provided with telephone connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The total number of people in the waiting list for telephone connections in Karnataka as on June 2003 is 109603; district-wise details of waiting list is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) The waiting list is planned to be cleared progressively during 2003-04 subject to timely availability of underground cable/WLL equipments and feasibility.